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## MINERS' HOSPITALS.

BY ANDREW ROY.

Read at Columbus Meeting, January 10, 1889.

The multiplication of accidents which accompany the development of mines, work-shops and factories, and other industrial establishments in which dangerous forces are daily encountered, has challenged the attention of the Legislature at nearly every session of that body for the past eighteen years. As the result of this attention, there have been laws enacted for the regulation and ventilation of mines, work-shops and factories, and State Inspectors appointed to give their whole time and attention to see that every precaution is taken to insure safety to the armies of laborers who pursue their callings where these dangerous forces are met. The safe-guards thus provided have lessened peril to life, health and limb, and brought about a more wholesome atmosphere in the subterranean work-shops of the miner, sending him to his daily labor stronger in body and clearer in intellect, and making of him a better workman and a better citizen. Where there was formerly strikes, with their accompanying lawlessness, there is now conciliation and mutual confidence. The friendly relations now existing between the miners and their employers all over the coal regions of the United States are due more to laws providing for the regulation, ventilation and inspection of mines than to all other causes combined.

But no matter how careful the General Assembly may be in framing laws providing for the proper security of life, health and limb in coal mines and other extra hazardous occupations, or how careful the inspectors may be in enforcing such laws, accidents will continue to happen. We might as well expect two opposing armies to meet in mortal combat without loss to either side, as expect accidents to cease in mines, on railroads, or in industrial occupations, in which there exists ever-recurring peril. Wise laws properly enforced, will reduce accidents to a minimum, but can not wholly prevent their recurrence.

In the business of railroading there were, as the Railroad Commissioner's annual report shows, 332 persons killed and 803 persons injured in the State of Ohio during the year 1887. In the thirteen years since the mines inspection act of Ohio went into operation, there have been as the Mine Inspectors' reports show, 393 persons killed in the mines. The number of now fatal accidents which occur in mines are as four to one. Of these, at

least one-half come under the head of serious accidents, in which bones are broken or the miner is so badly bruised in body as to unfit him for weeks or months, and not infrequently forever, from following his occupation.

But this is not the only danger which the miner encounters in his subterranean life. The noxious and poisonous gases, the damp and wet situation, the cramped and constrained positions, which are, to a greater or less extent, inseparable from mining, even when every provision is made for comfort, attack the lungs, and produce rheumatism and lumbago. In war there are fully as many soldiers who fall victims to the diseases resulting from exposure, hard marching, and imperfect food and clothing as fall in battle. In mining also, a similar condition of facts are true. The carbonaceous solidification of the air cells of the lungs, the contracted chest and the prostrated energies perform the work of death as surely as the ponderous masses of coal and shale.

The time has come when provision should be made by law for the establishment of public hospitals outside of incorporated municipalities.

In the State of Pennsylvania ample provision has been made by law for the care of people injured in and around coal mines, as the following acts, taken from the statute pamphlet laws of Pennsylvania, show:

Act 169, passed in the year 1879. "To provide for the selection of a site and the erection of a State Hospital for injured persons, to be located in the counties of Schuylkill, Carbon, Dauphin, Northumberland and Columbia, to be called the State Hospital, for injured persons of the anthracite coal region, and for the management of the same, and making appropriation therefor."

Act 264, passed in the year 1887. "To provide for the selection and erection of a State Hospital for injured persons, to be located at or near Hazleton, in the county of Luzerne, to be called the State Hospital, for injured persons of the middle coal field, and for the management of the same, and making an appropriation therefor."

Act 265, passed in 1887. "To provide for the selection of sites and the erection of a State Hospital therein for injured persons, to be located within the bituminous and semi-bituminous coal region of the commonwealth, to be called the State Hospital, for injured persons within the bituminous and semi-bituminous coal regions of Pennsylvania, and for the management of the same and making appropriation therefor."

It is perhaps right and proper that Pennsylvania, the foremost mining State in the Union, should lead off in the establishment of miners' hospitals. The necessity for sanitary legislation in regard to miners, owing to the dangerous character of the anthracite mines of Pennsylvania, led to the establishment of such

hospitals in that coal field, before any movement was made looking to the erection and maintainance of similiar institutions in the soft coal regions. But provision has now been made for the erection of State Hospitals in all the coal regions of the commonwealth. The urgent necessity for similiar institutions will soon suggest their erection and maintenance in all the mining States of the Union, as the mining laws which were started in Pennsylvania and Ohio spread to all the coal producing States.

It is not proposed in this paper to elaborate a scheme for any legislation on the subject of miners' hospitals, but simply to bring it to the attention of the Institute for discussion, and see whether a bill ought to be prepared and introduced in the General Assembly. Ohio is the second coal producing State of the Union. It is work which properly belongs within the legitimate sphere of our society, and its humanitarian object will command the approval of all good people in every walk of life.

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#### DISCUSSION OF PROF. ROY'S PAPER.

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Professor Orton: Mr. Roy what appropriations are demanded in Pennsylvania for the maintenance of those Hospitals separately?

Mr. Roy: I will have to say that I do not know. I have not had opportunity to complete my investigation. My paper was written more with the hope of creating discussion upon the subject than anything else.

Hon. R. M. Haseltine: It seems to be the tendency of this society to avoid discussion. I looked for a liberal discussion of Professor Orton's paper and also Mr. Roy's. I do not know what would be proper to say at this time upon the subject, as it seems to be a matter brought before the Institute for discussion, and not with a view to any definite action. I have not had an opportunity to examine the reports of the Inspectors as to the casualties on railroads and in factories, although both of their reports have been on my desk for some time. But the casualties in mines in our State are very great. I see in the reports the casualties are limited to those that are either serious or fatal. We are constantly receiving notice from various parts of the State of accidents of a minor character, and I have prepared a list of them. If I remember correctly, this year there were 29 fatal accidents, 78 serious ones and 131 of a minor character, such as bruises, sprains and of a character in which there were no bones broken. Now, if the railroads and work shops and factories produced, in proportion to the number of employes, a similar number of accidents, certainly the number in the State would aggregate a great many.

As to establishing hospitals, to take care of them, we are in a very much better position than they are in Pennsylvania, on account of the contour of the State. Our railroads are more direct; we have more railroad centers and more places where a hospital could be established to accommodate a greater number of patients than Pennsylvania would have in the same area. Still the expense of maintaining them would be very great, and the number of people who will apply, might vary very greatly in different localities. When the coal industries were at a low ebb and the coal trade was slack, there would be periods in which there would be an abundance of help without any employment and vice versa. It seems to me that this is a matter that would require a good deal of attention. I am glad the matter has been brought up, so that it may be discussed, and it is thought best to present the matter to the Legislature or to the people of the State, it can be done in an intelligent manner. I think it is a matter we ought not to act very hastily in; for if the State would take hold of it vigorously, they might take some steps and have some laws enacted that afterward would not meet their approval. I think this is a matter we ought to consider well, before we take any action, and then, when we have determined what we want to do, take hold of it vigorously, and, if possible, push it to a successful termination. I have no doubt it would be a very great advantage to the people employed in the mining districts of the State to have such hospitals located, so that they could be convenient of access. I have known of some three or four unfortunate miners during the past seven or eight months that were compelled to seek other hospitals for care, and I believe three of them were in some private hospitals among the Catholic societies, and one was in a hospital in Cleveland that belonged to the city. I do not know how many there would be that would feel as if they would like to go to a hospital for treatment, but when I was surveying I very rarely went to a mine but that I would find one or more miners who were laid up and receiving medical treatment, and were then supported by the generosity of their fellow workmen. It is a very common occurrence to see a subscription list going through the mines for contributions to aid some unfortunate individual who had been injured in the mines.

Mr. W. E. Peters, of Athens: Some months ago I read an elaborate account in the Engineer's News, of the Hospital in Pennsylvania, of its plan, and the general detail of its workings, and how satisfactory it had been; and the advisability of having a similar institution in our own State to care for persons who are injured in and about mines, occurred to me. It occurred to me that a great many of the accidents were peculiar, and required possibly a peculiar line of learning and training and medical ability to treat. As it is, the miners are thrown upon the Township in

many instances, where they receive very poor treatment; and I think this a subject which should enlist our sympathy and hearty support.

Mr. Walter Crafts, being called on by President Jennings, said: I might say just one word. I do not know how it is with the other mining districts of Ohio, but in quite a number of instances of injuries among the miners of the Hocking Valley, where they required better medical treatment than they could have at the mines, the injured miners have been removed to one of the Hospitals at Columbus, which are conducted under the auspices of the order of Sisters of Charity, and there they have received such attention and medical treatment as they need. If they are able to pay them something, they receive it; otherwise, the attendance is free. It occurred to me that, following the line suggested by Mr. Roy, pending the time when the Legislature of Ohio is ready to establish hospitals, as they have in Pennsylvania, there might be some appropriation in aid of these different hospitals scattered throughout the State now. For instance, there are two Hospitals in Columbus which depend very largely upon the means and provisions that can be gathered by Sisters of Charity.

They are not endowed, and have no special funds I understand. The Sisters of Charity give their work for nothing, only asking a living. It may be that there are similar hospitals in other coal fields that will be more available. It seems to me that a great deal might be done if the Legislature could be induced to make special appropriations to insure miners' treatment at such points already established.

Mr. Roy: I would suggest that a committee be appointed by the chair to inquire into the operation and results of the Miners' Hospital in Pennsylvania, and to report such recommendation as they see fit at the summer meeting of the Institute.

Mr. Haseltine: I will move you, Mr. President, that the Chairman appoint a committee of three to investigate the question of Miners' Hospitals in Pennsylvania, and report at our next summer meeting.

Motion seconded and carried.

President Jennings then appointed Hons. Andrew Roy, Thos. B. Bancroft and R. M. Haseltine to be members of the committee.